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CIDER TRAP FOR THE CHILDREN

ONE of our best workers says : " I asked a converted saloon-keeper, What do the signs in the saloon windows mean, 'Sweet Cider Free'?"

" Well," said he hesitatingly, " I really don't like to tell you ;" yet I urged it, and he said : " The thing is too Satanic. It is nothing but a lure—a regular trap. There are many boys from the country from pure, good homes, who have probably promised their mothers they would never drink. But they get home-sick in a great city, with no place to go to but a comfortable boarding house. They see these signs, and they think how good the sweet cider used to taste at home. One boy remembers how father made it, and how mother never thought of any harm in drinking it. One draught of cider would be almost home ; it would be as good as the odor of a clover field ; so he goes in and the bar-keeper pours out a glass, and nothing to pay.

" He has taken one nibble at the bait and that is enough. He is in for it now ; so he goes in the second time, for ' there isn't the least harm in sweet cider—it wouldn't hurt a baby' ; but he is ashamed to go in without paying something, so he buys a glass of beer ; next thing there is a game of billiards ; then he is fast. The business is done, and that case is secure as a regular customer !"

Cider is a special temptation to children. It is associated with the apples which they like and eat freely, and without harm. They help gather the apples, and they see the cider made, and they think they know all about it. They partake of it freely, as not only harmless, but wholesome. It is one of the treats of an autumn day to have a straw, and suck so-called sweet cider either at home or at the house of a neighbor ; and this in spite of the fact that it does sometimes make them drunk.

They get it at the dinner-table, and in the evening with the apples and nuts at the fireside, or if not, then they filch it out of the cider vinegar barrel or they get it near the schoolhouse of a man who peddles it from a waggon. City boys will not sign the pledge because they desire to drink cider at their annual visits to the country, and at grandma's Thanksgiving party. Almost everywhere and in a thousand ways, cider is the devil's alcohol trap for the children. It does not follow that when he catches them he kills them at once. He is quite willing to let them grow up into thoroughly demoralized specimens of humanity known as cider drunkards.

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